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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Office of Distribution
Washington 25, D.C.

May 1944

FACT SHEET ON THE NEED FOR MORE TOMATOES IN 1944

The Problem:

Because of increased war requirements, that portion of the commercial pack of canned whole tomatoes and tomato juice available to civilians from the 1944 crop will be reduced drastically. It is only five-eighths of the allocation to civilians from the previous crop year. Since tomatoes are a good source of vitamin C, this may mean a serious deficiency in the average civilian diet, particularly in October, when citrus fruits, the richest sources of vitamin C, become somewhat limited.

The Solution:

To offset this indicated deficiency, it is imperative that more tomatoes be grown for home consumption and canning. Planting more tomatoes in Victory Gardens, and canning the maximum possible quantities will go far toward insuring adequate Vitamin C in the family diet this fall.

With the exception of the South and other warm areas, tomatoes can still be planted over a major portion of the country. However, the end of the tomato planting season is rapidly approaching, and the need for immediate action is urgent. Through the central portion of the country, and including such cities as Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, and St. Louis, the season extends until June 10, for areas farther north until June 15, and in the higher altitudes and mountainous sections of the West until the end of June.

IMPORTANCE OF TOMATOES AS A FOOD

Tomatoes, together with citrus fruits and raw greens, comprise group number two of the Basic 7 foods. The Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics found that in 1943 tomatoes and citrus fruits together contributed 29 percent of the total vitamin C value of the foods brought into the average American kitchen.

Tomatoes are an efficient source of Vitamin C. Due to their acid content, the vitamin C in tomatoes is more stable than in most other foods. Thus, there is likely to be less loss of this perishable vitamin in cooking and in canning.

Tomatoes are an economical source of Vitamin C. They are neither difficult nor costly to grow or can, and they may be made generally available, at all seasons, in canned form. This makes them a good food to rely upon for the inclusion of vitamin C in the diet. By canning whole tomatoes and tomato juice, vitamin C may be obtained from the cupboard and canned food shelves at a time when supplies of citrus fruits in orchards and on food counters are likely to be light. This is particularly true in the fall, during the lapse between the mid-year and the fall marketing seasons of grapefruit and oranges.

Tomatoes are an easy product to can, have a variety of uses, and are a popular everyday food. Next to whole canned tomatoes and tomato juice, chili sauce, and ketchup are second in value and important from a taste standpoint.

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SPECIFIC NUTRITIVE VALUE

Citrus fruits have a somewhat higher vitamin C content than tomatoes, but from a practical point of view, tomatoes - fresh or canned - or tomato juice may be used interchangeably with citrus fruits, providing the tomatoes are used in larger quantity. Tomatoes are also high in vitamin A. Although vitamin values will vary, one medium small tomato or one 5-ounce glass of tomato juice will supply about one-third of the day's requirements of vitamin C for an adult and about one-fifth of his vitamin A needs.

To insure the greatest vitamin C value, let tomatoes ripen on the vine. They will have more vitamin C than if they are picked green and allowed to ripen on the window ledge, on the back porch, or in some other convenient nook. Use tomatoes generously in season and can all that can be spared. Tomatoes grown and marketed in summer have considerably higher amounts of vitamin C than those available on the markets in winter.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE:

Home Canning of Fruits and Vegetables, AFI-93, (In press, available about June 5)
Pickle and Relish Recipes, AFI-103, (In press, available about the middle of July)

Community Canning Centers, MP 544, contains information on the establishment and operation of community canning centers. Copies available from Office of Information, U.S.D.A., Washington 25, D.C. Copies of MP 544 may also be obtained from the regional offices listed below.

COMMUNITY CANNING CENTERS

General inquiries regarding establishment and operation of community canning centers may be addressed to the Civilian Food Requirements Division in the following regional Offices of Distribution, W.F.A.:

821 Market Street
San Francisco 3, Calif.

5 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago 3, Ill.

Western Union Building
Atlanta 3, Ga.

425 Wilson Building
Dallas 1, Tex.

150 Broadway
New York 7, N. Y.

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